

Introduced by Senators Hill and Knight

(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Beth Gaines and Quirk)

May 22, 2013

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 46—Relative to the National Academy of Sciences sesquicentennial anniversary celebration.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 46, as introduced, Hill. National Academy of Sciences.

This measure would honor the sesquicentennial of the National Academy of Sciences.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The year 2013 commemorates the sesquicentennial
2 of the year in which President Abraham Lincoln signed an act
3 incorporating the National Academy of Sciences to advise the
4 federal government on “any subject of science or art”; and
5 WHEREAS, As science and technology began to play
6 increasingly important roles in national priorities and public life,
7 the National Academy of Sciences expanded to include the
8 National Research Council in 1916, which was created by executive
9 order of President Woodrow Wilson for the purpose of conducting
10 the institution’s science policy and technical work by working
11 outside the framework of government to ensure unbiased, credible
12 advice on matters of science, technology, and medicine; and
13 WHEREAS, The National Academy of Engineering and the
14 Institute of Medicine were founded in 1964 and 1970, respectively,
15 under the same congressional charter as the National Academy of
16 Sciences to perform similar advisory roles; and

1 WHEREAS, These private, nonprofit institutions enlist the aid
2 of the nation's most knowledgeable scientists, engineers, health
3 professionals, and other experts who volunteer their time to provide
4 authoritative, independent advice on many of the pressing
5 challenges that face the nation and the world; and

6 WHEREAS, Each year a small number of distinguished
7 individuals are elected by their peers to membership in the National
8 Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and
9 the Institute of Medicine, bringing the total membership of these
10 three institutions to include more than 6,000 of the nation's most
11 accomplished scientists, engineers, and health professionals living
12 today; and

13 WHEREAS, The earliest reports of these institutions addressed
14 United States weights, measures, and coinage; examined magnetic
15 deviation of compasses on the Navy's new ironclad warships; and
16 proposed the creation of the National Park Service and the national
17 park system; while other reports contributed to the founding of the
18 United States Geological Survey and the reorganization of the
19 National Weather Service and Signal Corps; and

20 WHEREAS, Since their inception, these institutions have also
21 suggested methods for controlling landslides, as during the
22 construction of the Panama Canal, studied highway safety as the
23 nation's transportation system began to expand, issued reports on
24 the feasibility of the atomic bomb, which led to the Manhattan
25 Project, and studied the biological effects of atomic radiation,
26 which led to national policy on this issue; and

27 WHEREAS, In 1962, a landmark report was issued at the request
28 of President John F. Kennedy regarding an evaluation of the
29 research on conservation and the development of the nation's
30 natural resources, and in the 1970s and 1980s, important studies
31 on motor vehicle emission standards and acid rain were influential
32 in bringing national and international attention to these issues; and

33 WHEREAS, On the health front, in the 1980s, the first reports
34 to identify research needed to confront the HIV/AIDS epidemic
35 were issued; other studies led to a blueprint for the Human Genome
36 Project. A landmark 1999 study on medical errors also galvanized
37 the medical community and sparked a national movement to
38 improve patient safety; and

39 WHEREAS, The significance of these institutions' scientific
40 reports has come not only through their value to and impact on

1 California scientific disciplines of biotechnology and high
2 technology, but also as those reports have informed policy on such
3 diverse areas as marine health, greenhouse gas emissions,
4 evaluation in education, water policy, and agriculture; and

5 WHEREAS, The state has been not only the beneficiary of
6 scientific policy advice, but also its benefactor, as more members
7 of the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of
8 Engineering, and Institute of Medicine live and work in California
9 than in any other state; and

10 WHEREAS, The National Academy of Sciences continues to
11 provide sound scientific, technological, and health policy advice;
12 now therefore be it

13 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
14 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature takes great pleasure in
15 honoring the National Academy of Sciences for its 150 years of
16 commitment to providing unbiased, peer-reviewed advice on
17 science, technology, and medicine to our nation; and be it further

18 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
19 this resolution to the President of the National Academy of
20 Sciences and to the author for appropriate distribution.